

Appl. No. 09/685,305  
Amdt. Dated July 31, 2003  
Further Reply to Office Action of April 10, 2003

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 to 17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A self-adhering surface covering comprising:

a substrate;

a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer disposed on the substrate and having an adhesive surface located distally ~~from~~ opposite the substrate, the adhesive layer comprising an adhesive, the adhesive being substantially non-stringing; and

a barrier layer disposed substantially on and covering ~~between~~ from about 1% ~~[[and]]~~ to about 10% of the adhesive surface, wherein the barrier layer comprises a plurality of particles, the particles having a diameter substantially equal to or greater than the thickness of the adhesive layer, the particles being substantially non-adhesive, wherein the barrier layer exhibits a crush resistance of at least about 10 psi and is crushable when subjected to a load of about 20 psi or greater, and wherein the particles are selected from the group consisting of solid particles~~[[.]]~~ and porous particles ~~and combinations thereof~~.

19. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles are ~~randomly~~ and substantially uniformly distributed over the surface of the adhesive layer.

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20. (Original) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein at least some of the particles are distributed on the adhesive surface in a pattern.

Claim 21 (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles have a diameter substantially ~~at least~~ greater than the thickness of the adhesive layer.

23. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles have a diameter substantially ~~between~~ from about 2 to about 6 mils.

24. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles are distributed onto the adhesive surface in an amount ~~between~~ from about 0.05 ~~[[and]]~~ to about 0.2 grams/ft<sup>2</sup> of adhesive surface.

25. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles are distributed onto the adhesive surface in an amount ~~between~~ from about 0.01 ~~[[and]]~~ to about 0.1 cm<sup>3</sup>/ft<sup>2</sup> of adhesive surface.

Claim 26 (Canceled)

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27. (Original) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles cover about 2% of the adhesive surface of the adhesive layer.

28. (Original) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles are collapsible or fragile under conditions employed for pressure-bonding the surface covering to a desired site of bonding.

Claim 29 (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the adhesive layer has a thickness between from about 1 [[and]] to about 2 mils.

31. (Previously Presented) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein pressure-sensitive adhesive layer comprises an adhesive selected from natural rubber adhesives, synthetic rubber adhesives, acrylic adhesives, vinyl acetate adhesives, urethane adhesives, and mixtures thereof.

32. (Currently Amended) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the pressure-sensitive adhesive layer comprises an e-beam curable adhesive ~~comprising~~ formed from tridecyl acrylate and acrylic acid.

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33. (Original) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein at least some of the particles are partially embedded in the adhesive layer.

34. (Original) The surface covering as claimed in claim 18, wherein the particles are capable of substantially resisting crushing upon being subjected to a load of about 60 lb/ft<sup>2</sup> which is dropped a vertical distance of about 1 foot.

Claims 35 to 54 (Canceled)

55. (Previously Presented) The surface covering of claim 18, wherein the non-adhesive particles are selected from the group consisting of calcium carbonate, barium carbonate, calcium sulfate, barium sulfate, aluminum sulfate, molybdenum disulfide, titanium oxide, aluminum hydroxide, alumina, silica, magnesium oxide, calcium oxide, calcium hydroxide, ferrous oxide, ferric oxide, cured rubbers, ebonite, resins, and combinations thereof.

56. (Previously Presented) The surface covering of claim 18, wherein the substrate is substantially rigid.

57. (Previously Presented) The surface covering of claim 18, wherein the barrier layer further comprises a second plurality of particles, the particles of the second plurality being substantially non-adhesive hollow particles.